

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

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May 22, 1985



ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-39-85

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: CORRECTIVE ACTION IN AFDC

REFERENCE:

The new AFDC county corrective action planning process has been in place for two full planning cycles. During development of the process and throughout these first two cycles we have maintained close and frequent contact with counties to insure the process is as effective and efficient for counties as possible. In December 1984 we sent counties a questionnaire to solicit comments and suggestions on the process and the activities of the AFDC Corrective Action Bureau (CAB).

The purpose of this letter is threefold: 1) to provide a summary of the questionnaire results and our observations of the process; 2) to tell you about changes we are making in the process; and 3) to tell you of some other corrective action activities we are doing or plan to do.

Questionnaire Results and Observations

Thirty-nine counties responded to our questionnaire. Responses indicated that counties were generally very supportive of the planning process and our overall approach to AFDC corrective action. Most responding counties stated that the process was not difficult to follow, they liked receiving written feedback on their corrective action plans (CAPs) and they did not see a need to change the current planning process (with one exception, noted below). A few counties stated they felt the process was too time consuming and that they would prefer not to have to submit CAPs. Some small counties indicated that they have difficulty applying the process to their situation. Almost all responding counties noted that they liked learning of corrective action ideas from other counties and several expressed interest in corrective action workshops, such as those held by the Bay Area Welfare Directors and by Southern Counties AFDC Task Force. Some of these counties expressed particular interest in evaluation

design being a workshop topic. The one item which a number of counties expressed interest in changing is the June and December due dates for the CAPs. Those counties pointed out the difficulty in trying to complete the process in the short time between having final QC data available and the CAP due dates. Some counties also felt that two complete CAPs per year was excessive. These two concerns are being addressed in the changes discussed below.

Our observations are not inconsistent with county questionnaire responses. We have seen a real willingness by counties to use the problem solving process as their corrective action model. Through our review of CAPs, conversations with county staff and participation in county corrective action committee meetings it is clear that counties are working diligently to understand their error problems, to determine likely causes and to select actions which address those causes. We have also found counties to be responsive to the suggestions and information provided in our CAP response letters. We have observed that three process steps stand out as causing the most difficulty for counties. These steps are error specification, error cause, and corrective action evaluation. We have also noted that some counties have been struggling with making their corrective action committees into productive and efficiently operating groups. Some of these counties have sought our assistance in this area. Finally, we have found that in counties in which corrective action planning was the QC supervisor's responsibility, program staff are now sharing more of that responsibility. This is entirely appropriate, since "both sides of the house" are needed in problem solving and planning.

Changes in County CAPs

To address the county concerns about CAP due dates and frequency we are making the following two changes:

1. The due dates for the CAPs are being extended from June 1 and December 1 to July 1 and January 15, respectively; and
2. The CAP due January 15 will be a complete annual plan and the CAP due July 1 will be a progress report on the plan submitted the previous January.

The content of the January 15 annual CAP will remain as currently described in the AFDC County Corrective Action Planning Process Handbook. For QC counties, the annual CAP should include error data from the immediate prior April-September QC period, as well as data from earlier periods and other sources when appropriate.

Minimum requirements for the content of the July 1 progress report will be information covering four sections of the Handbook, as follows:

Handbook Sections

Error Magnitude	I.A.1., pages 6-12
Error Elements	I.A.2., pages 12-15
Status of Corrective Action Implementation	II.A., pages 51-53
Corrective Action Evaluation	II.B., pages 54-57

Counties should use the Handbook instructions and formats applicable to these four sections for guidance in completing the progress report.

Counties, at their option, can go beyond the minimum requirements for the progress report. In some situations, a county probably should go beyond the minimum, e.g., if all the steps of the planning process were not complete for a particular error element or area of focus when the last annual CAP was submitted; or if the most recent error data reveal a new problem serious enough to compel immediate attention.

The AFDC Corrective Action Bureau will continue to respond in writing to all county CAPs, including progress reports.

To implement these changes we will revise regulations in Division 15-400. We will start this revision process now. Effective immediately, the new CAP format may be used and we will now accept CAPs according to the proposed extended due dates. Thus, the next CAP is a progress report which, although normally due on June 1, 1985, may be submitted with a due date of July 1, 1985.

Other Corrective Action Activities

As part of our role in assisting counties in AFDC corrective action planning, the AFDC CAB is involved in a variety of activities.

- o A training session on error specification and cause has been developed and presented in several counties. This training is intended for county staff directly involved in the determination of the causes of errors. The training can be done in three to four hours and is available upon request.
- o An addendum on evaluating corrective action is being developed. Issuance of the addendum will be followed by training workshops for county staff if necessary.
- o A guide for the establishment of effective and efficient county corrective action committees is under development. The focus will be the committee's role in the corrective action planning process. The guide will be made available to counties and used by CAB consultants in their work with county staff.
- o Although it is our intent that the planning process and the requirements for county CAPs be flexible enough to apply to counties of all sizes, the Handbook apparently does not communicate this clearly to some small counties. We will be preparing modifications to the Handbook to better show small counties how they can effectively and efficiently use the process.
- o We will continue to share corrective action techniques and ideas with counties through the AFDC Clearinghouse.


- o The Mother Lode counties have decided to do a corrective action workshop similar to those held in Southern California and the Bay Area. We will be assisting them in the planning and design of the workshop and are available as a resource to other counties interested in corrective action workshops.

We appreciate county reception of our approach to corrective action in the AFDC program. Our objective is to be of assistance in making corrective action an ongoing and productive aspect of county AFDC operations. We welcome your comments and suggestions in that regard as well as how we conduct business with you. Please write or telephone your comments, questions or requests for assistance to Charlie Marvin or your AFDC corrective action consultant at:

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Thank you for your commitment and cooperation.


ROBERT A. HOREL
Deputy Director

cc: CWDA